

UNCLE SAM MAY HAVE TO SETTLE

Matter of Killing Japanese on the Pribilof Islands Not Yet Ended.

UNITED STATES PLACED IN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT

**It Looks as if North American
Commercial Company Ruled
With Iron Hand.**

Special to The Tribune.
WASHINGTON, Aug. 13.—Contrary to the current impression relative thereto, it is not at all unlikely that the United States will have to settle for the slaughter of sundry Japanese by agents of the Department of Commerce and Labor on one of the Pribilof islands in letting some other day, and also that the arrest of another batch of Japanese will have to be explained to the satisfaction of the Japanese Government.

The many thing about the affair for the United States is that anyone who attempts to land on those islands is liable to be shot at if he can not show a permit from the North American Commission to Japan, the United States Government. Even if the Japanese were lost in the fog and landed for the innocent purpose of learning where they were, they were certain of arrest, if nothing more. The attitude of the Government and of the North American Commission is that anyone who comes there without a permit is necessarily there to steal sea skins, an assumption which, in the main, true. It is not a locality to attract many callers outside of those accidental ones who get lost in the dense fog that sometimes prevails in those waters.

But even under these circumstances it is a grave question whether the ready use of firearms to stall off visitors can be defended, especially in an international case. Certainly if an unarmed person should land on the coast of Japan for any purpose whatever, and should be fired upon and some of them killed, the United States would be expected to demand an explanation forthwith. It would be absurd to substantiate the theory that it is necessary to kill non-resisting people in order to keep them from committing larceny, and all reports so far agree that the Japanese not only did not resist, but were in retreat when fired upon.

Another statement given out here is that the position of the United States Government in this matter is exactly similar to that of the Government of Newfoundland in protecting its fisheries within the three-mile limit from the Yankee fishermen of Gloucester, but nothing could be more ridiculous than such a comparison. The analogy could only hold true if the Newfoundland Government were to let its fishermen work for the corporation under a twenty-year contract on a royalty basis, and were to compel all the inhabitants of Newfoundland to work for the corporation at a rate of wages fixed by the Government and the corporation, payment for this labor to be made in provisions and clothing at prices to be fixed by the corporation. To make the likeness exact, the Government would be necessary for the rate of wages to be so low as to render the inhabitants unable to support themselves, thus requiring the Government to make an annual appropriation to keep the people alive, while the contracting corporation rolled in riches. But the exact opposite is the fact as regards Newfoundland. The Government does not protect its fisheries for the benefit of all the people, so that any who choose may take fish and sell them.

With the inhabitants of the Pribilof islands the situation is exactly as described above. The seal fisheries are not so extensive as on the other islands, people living there, and if one of the is found taking a seal without permission he is just as likely to have a bullet whistling about his ears as any Japanese boater. The seal fisheries are now in the hands of the United Corporation known as the North American Commercial company, which pays the United States a royalty of \$10,234.46 for every seal skin taken, and makes a clean profit of \$10,000 on each animal transported to the inhabitants of the islands it pays 75 cents a skin for the

work of killing and dressing, which payment is in barter at company price and is not enough to maintain the people. The company has a right to make an annual appropriation for the support to keep them alive until the company needs them for the next year's harvest, all the killing of seals taking place during two months in the summer. The company has a right to take Newfoundland province in the Pribilof islands it would protect and regulate the seal fisheries for the use and benefit of all the people who live there, in what is about the worst of the world's richest natives in North America. In the old days, when the seals were more numerous and the circumstances of the people less restricted, practically everyone on the islands was working as a seal hunter and dresser. But now the last remnants of these are disappearing, the people being obliged to spend their savings to keep alive.

Had Cost Government Much.

Since 1870 the Government of the United States has paid out no less than \$572,066.38 for the support of the people and the support of the fisheries of the Farallón Islands, and in the same time it is estimated that the corporation holding the contract giving it a monopoly of the sealskin output has made a net profit of \$16,952,970.40. This estimate is based upon the Government's estimate of the amount of seal-skins sold at \$5,667,206.40, and a general knowledge of the price at which seal skins have been sold and the expense of marketing the same. The estimate is made by

The Old Soldier Goes Out With the Nation's Banner and Spry Stays In With the Church Rag.